



BRIEFING: DECEMBER 5, 2013, BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #7

TO: Chairman Richard and Board Members

FROM: Diana Gomez, Central California Regional Director

DATE: December 5, 2013

RE: Approval of City of Fresno Cooperative Agreement Regarding Veterans Boulevard

Introduction

Authority staff requests the Board to delegate authority to the CEO to negotiate and execute a cooperative agreement up to \$28 million with the City of Fresno for the construction of Veterans Boulevard.

Background

Construction of the first 29-miles of the high-speed rail system between Madera and Fresno will require a number of local road closures. Some of those closures will be permanent; others will be temporary while overcrossing and undercrossing structures are constructed.

Authority staff has worked with the City of Fresno to decide how local road closures are mitigated by constructing overcrossings, undercrossing, or reconnecting with existing local roads. In the City's northwest area, Carnegie Avenue – the primary access point for a large residential area – must be permanently closed. Therefore, reconnecting that residential area is a project traffic mitigation requirement.

The City of Fresno requested that the Authority assist in funding the City's Veterans Boulevard project that will provide access to the residential area impacted by the Carnegie Avenue closure. The parties agreed that the City of Fresno would fund the design, environmental clearance, and right of way acquisition for the project, while the Authority would cover the construction costs for Veterans Boulevard. The Carnegie Avenue closure mitigation is not included in Construction Package 1 (CP 1) recently awarded to Tutor Perini Zachry Parsons .

Discussion

Authority staff considered a number of options for providing access to the residential area currently served by Carnegie Avenue. One option considered and rejected was to build an overcrossing of the Union Pacific Railroad and high-speed rail rights of way at or near the

current alignment of Carnegie Avenue. However, because of the significant vertical clearance requirements of high-speed rail, this would result in a very large overcrossing structure and approach fills. In addition to the impacts to the developed area around existing Carnegie Avenue, the westerly touchdown of the Carnegie overcrossing structure would be well west of Golden State Boulevard. This would require the acquisition of substantial right-of-way to reconnect Carnegie back to Golden State resulting in the relocation of a number of industrial businesses.

A second option considered and rejected consisted of building an undercrossing at Carnegie. A road under the high-speed rail alignment requires substantially less vertical clearance and smaller structures and approaches than an overcrossing. However, while an undercrossing reduces the right of way needs, the industrial businesses impacts on the west side of Golden State remained. Further, a Union Pacific Railroad shoofly bypass would be required during construction, adding time, and costs.

The preferred option is to close existing Carnegie at a point just east of the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way, and connect Carnegie to the new Veterans Boulevard. A Union Pacific Railroad/ High-Speed Rail overcrossing is required for the new Veterans Boulevard as well as connection of Veterans Boulevard back to Golden State Boulevard. This option would satisfy the Authority's requirement to mitigate the closure of Carnegie, and it would help facilitate the City's construction of a portion of the Veterans Boulevard project.

The current estimate for the Veterans Boulevard Overcrossing project is approximately \$28 million for construction and construction management support, and approximately \$15 million for environment, design, and right-of-way support, right of way acquisition and utility relocation. The City of Fresno and Authority staff propose to jointly fund this project with the Authority paying the construction cost, and the City of Fresno paying the environmental, and design costs and most of the right of way cost. The City would be acquiring part of the right of way needed for the high-speed rail project itself. The Authority would be responsible for reimbursing the City for that portion of the right of way cost. The City of Fresno has completed the environmental document for this project, and would be responsible for performing all design and right of way acquisition activities, as well as advertising, awarding, and administering the construction contract. The Authority would provide project oversight in the vicinity of the high-speed rail alignment, and would provide the construction capital and support funding.

The Authority's portion of the funding for this project is included in the cost estimates presented in the 2012 Business Plan.

It is anticipated that the City will complete Veterans Boulevard project prior to the Authority's CP 1 contractor completing the realignment of Golden State Boulevard in this area.

This proposal would result in a savings to the Authority over the other two other options considered for reconnecting Carnegie to Golden State Boulevard, it would reduce impacts to area businesses and residents, it would provide a savings to the City on their overall Veterans Boulevard interchange project, and it would advance completion of the interchange project. Further, it conserves resources by eliminating a structure at Carnegie.

The City of Fresno and Authority staff has reached agreement on the basic tenets of the cooperative agreement. The Fresno City Council has approved the agreement in its current form and delegated final approval to the City's Public Works Director.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board approve delegation of authority to the CEO, following successful negotiation of a final agreement, to enter into a cooperative agreement for up to \$28 million with the City of Fresno regarding Veterans Boulevard.

Attachments

- Draft Cooperative Agreement between the City of Fresno and the Authority
- Veterans Boulevard Map
- City of Fresno Council Resolution
- Draft Resolution HSR #13-35